

FAIRFAX PROJECT

21 Students Study Chinese

By WILLIAM M. REDDIG JR.
Star Staff Writer

In Room 111 of a high school named after the late Secretary of State George C. Marshall, 21 students began gliding easily over the Bamboo Curtain last week.

The hand-picked 11 girls and 10 boys are members of the much-debated Fairfax County Chinese Language Institute. Six hours a day for six weeks this summer they will be learning the Chinese language and facts about the country.

The institute is said to be the first of its kind—combining Chinese language and area studies—held in a public school in the United States. Only Thayer Academy in Massachusetts has attempted a similar experiment with high school students.

Easier Than Expected

Earlier this year, members of the County Board of Supervisors sharply criticized the non-credit program as an unwanted luxury. However, the school board held firm and the institute got going last Monday, drawing on a \$5,000 special fund.

The students are taking in stride the advanced studies, soaking up material which wouldn't be available at most colleges in the county.

"We're finding the Chinese language a lot easier than we figured," said Daniel Whitaker, 15, who regularly attends J. E. B. Stuart High School. "For one thing, the verb endings are all the same."

From 8 a.m. until noon each weekday the students study the Chinese language with Mrs. Chuan Ouyang Chau, a native of China and a language lecturer at Columbia University.

Conversation, writing and language laboratory training is undertaken with texts and tapes used by the Foreign Service.

Hear Specialists

From 1 to 3 p.m., the emphasis is on geography, history and culture. The main lecturer and director of the program is Dr. Clyde B. Sargeant, retired director of the Central Intelligence Agency's area studies school.



DR. CLYDE B. SARGEANT
Directs Institute

To broaden the fare, he's bringing in an all-star cast of guest lecturers, including scholars, authors and government officials with China specialties.

Field trips will include a special State Department briefing, a visit to the Freer Gallery and the Library of Congress Chinese Collection, said to be the best of its kind in the world, and attendance at a Voice of America broadcast beamed in Chinese.

"In the time allotted, we can only give the students an impression of China," Dr. Sargeant said. "But if a student follows through with the Chinese language study planned in Fairfax schools next year he should be able to enter, with advanced standing, a second-year college language course."

To Examine Present Policies

Although there is an emphasis on Chinese history and tradition, modern-day Red China is not avoided. The sixth week of the

program will consist entirely of discussions of present Chinese relations with the United States and the United Nations.

"We treat communism, too," Dr. Sargeant said, "but this is not a course about communism. It's about Chinese who happen to be Communists."

Students are encouraged to enter give-and-take discussions with their instructors and so far the faculty has not found that the material is above their heads.

"They're pretty sharp," Dr. Sargeant said. "Perhaps we can show that educators should be teaching high school students in a more purposeful way than in the past."

One student, Roger Sollenberger, reportedly went home after the first day and began addressing Chinese words to his father. His father, however, was primed for the test. Harold E. Sollenberger is dean of the State

Department's Foreign Language Institute.

The 21 students were chosen from 100 volunteers for the non-tuition program. They all have been standouts in English, social studies or foreign languages the last three years, have excellent over-all records and have passed a modern language aptitude test.

After finishing with the summer institute, Dr. Sargeant will become visiting professor of international affairs at the Naval War College in Newport, R.I.

"It should provide quite a contrast, teaching high school students and then Navy captains and admirals up there," he said.